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القسم او الفرع : اللغة الانجليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

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اسم المادة باللغة العربية : الرواية

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الانجليزية : **Novel**

Charles Dickens *Hard Times* :

Background:

Hard Times, **a social protest novel of nineteenth-century England**, is aptly titled. Not only does the working class, known as the "Hands," have a "hard time" in this novel; so do the other classes as well. Dickens divided the novel into three separate books, two of which, "**Sowing**" and "**Reaping**," exemplify the biblical concept of "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). The third book, entitled "**Garnering**," Dickens paraphrased from the book of Ruth, in which Ruth garnered grain in the fields of Boaz. Each of his major characters sows, each reaps, and each garners what is left.

Since Charles Dickens wrote of the conditions and the people of his time, it is worthwhile to understand the period in which he lived and worked.

No British sovereign since Queen Elizabeth I has exerted such a profound influence on an age as did Queen Victoria (1837-1901). She presided over the period rather than shaped it. The nineteenth century was an age of continual change and unparalleled expansion in almost every field of activity. Not only was it an era of **reform**, **industrialization**, **achievement in science**, **government**, **literature**, and world **expansion** but also a time when people struggled to assert their independence. Man, represented en masse as the laboring class, rose in power and prosperity and gave his voice to government.

There were great intellectual and spiritual disturbances both in society and within the individual. The literature of the period reflects the conflict between the advocates of the triumphant material prosperity of the country and those who felt it had been achieved by the exploitation of human beings at the expense of spiritual and esthetic values. In theory, people of the period committed themselves on the whole to **a hard-headed utilitarianism**, yet most of the literature is idealistic and romantic.

The prophets of the time deplored the inroads of science upon religious faith, but the Church of England was revived by the Oxford Movement; evangelical Protestantism was never stronger and more active; and the Roman Catholic Church was becoming an increasingly powerful religious force in England.

Not even in politics were the issues clear-cut. The Whigs prepared the way for the great economic reform of the age, the repeal of the Corn Laws; but it was a Tory leader, Sir Robert Peel, who finally brought that repeal through Parliament.

This century, marked by the Industrial Revolution, was also a century of political and economic unrest in the world: America was torn by the strife of the Civil War; France was

facéd with the problem of recovery from the wars of Napoleon; and Germany was emerging as a great power.

The Industrial Revolution, though productive of much good, created deplorable living conditions in England. Overcrowding in the cities as a consequence of the population shift from rural to urban areas and the increase in the numbers of immigrants from poverty-stricken Ireland resulted in disease and hunger for thousands of the laboring class. But with the fall of Napoleon, the returning soldiers added not only to the growing numbers of workers but also to the hunger and misery. With the advent of the power loom came unemployment. A surplus labor supply caused wages to drop. Whole families, from the youngest to the oldest, had to enter the factories, the woolen mills, the coal mines, or the cotton mills in order to survive. **Children were exploited by employers; for a pittance a day a nine-year-old worked twelve and fourteen hours in the mills, tied to the machines, or in the coal mines pulling carts to take the coal from the shafts. Their fingers were smaller and quicker than those of adults; thus, for picking out the briars and burrs from both cotton and wool, employers preferred to hire children.**

Studies of the working and living conditions in England between 1800 and 1834 showed that 82 percent of the workers in the mills were between the ages of eleven and eighteen. Many of these studies proved that 62 percent of the workers in the fabric mills had tuberculosis. The factories were open, barnlike structures, not equipped with any system of heat and ventilation.

These studies, presented to Parliament, resulted in some attempt to bring about reforms in working conditions and to alleviate some of the dire poverty in England. In 1802, the Health Act was passed to provide two hours of instruction for all apprentices. In 1819, a child labor law was enacted which limited to eleven hours a day the working hours of children five to eleven years of age; however, this law was not enforced.

The first great "Victorian" reform antedated Queen Victoria by five years. Until 1832 the old Tudor list of boroughs was still in use. As a result, large towns of recent growth had no representation in Parliament, while some unpopulated localities retained theirs. In essence, the lords who controlled these boroughs (known as rotten boroughs in history) sold seats to the highest bidders. This political pattern was broken when the Reform Bill of 1832 abolished all boroughs with fewer than two thousand inhabitants and decreased by 50 percent the number of representatives admitted from towns with a population between two thousand and four thousand. Only after rioting and a threat of civil war did the House of Lords approve the Reform Bill. With this bill came a new type of Parliament — one with representatives from the rising middle class-and several other important reforms.

In 1833, **the Emancipation Bill** ended slavery in British colonies, with heavy compensation to the owners. Even though chattel slavery was abolished, industrial slavery continued. Also in 1833 came the first important Factory Law, one which prohibited the employment of children under the age of nine. Under this law, children between the ages of nine and thirteen could not work for more than nine hours a day. Night work was prohibited for persons under twenty-one years of age and for all women. By 1849, subsequent legislation provided half day or alternate days of schooling for the factory children, thus cutting down the working hours of children fourteen or under.

The Poor Law of 1834 provided for workhouses; indigent persons, accustomed to living where they pleased, bitterly resented this law, which compelled them to live with their families in workhouses. In fact, the living conditions were so bad that these workhouses were named the "Bastilles of the Poor." Here the poor people, dependent upon the government dole, were subjected to the inhuman treatment of cruel supervisors; an example is Mr. Bumble in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. If the people rejected this rule of body and soul, they had two alternatives as the machines took more jobs and the wages dropped — either steal or starve. Conditions in prisons were even more deplorable than in the workhouses. Debtors' prison, as revealed in Dickens' *David Copperfield*, was a penalty worse than death.

The undemocratic character of **the Reform Bill of 1832**, the unpopularity of the Poor Law, and the unhappy conditions of the laborers led to the Chartist Movement of the 1840s. The demands of the Chartist Movement were the abolition of property qualifications for members of Parliament, salaries for members of Parliament, annual election of Parliament, equal electoral districts, equal manhood suffrage, and voting by secret ballot. Chartism, the most formidable working-class movement England had ever seen, failed. The Chartists had no way to identify their cause with the interests of any influential class. Ultimately, though, most of the ends they sought were achieved through free discussion and legislative action.

In 1846, the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, led the repeal of **the Corn Laws of 1815**. With the repeal of these laws, which were nothing more than protective tariffs in the interest of the landlords and farmers to prevent the importation of cheap foreign grain, came a period of free trade and a rapid increase in manufacture and commerce which gave the working class an opportunity to exist outside the workhouses.

As the country awoke to the degradation of the working classes, industrial reform proceeded gradually but inevitably, in spite of the advocates of laissez-faire and industrial freedom. The

political life of the nineteenth century was tied up with its economic theories. The doctrine of laissez-faire (let alone), first projected by Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, was later elaborated upon by Jeremy Bentham and T. R. Malthus, whose doctrine of Utility was the principle of "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." In other words, this principle meant that the government should allow the economic situation to adjust itself naturally through the laws of supply and demand. With this system, a person at one extreme becomes a millionaire and at the other, a beggar. Thomas Carlyle called this system of economy "the dismal science." Dickens, influenced by Carlyle, castigated it again and again. The Utilitarians, however, helped bring about the repeal of the Corn Laws and to abolish cruel punishment. When Victoria became queen, there were four hundred and thirty-eight offenses punishable by death. During her reign, the death penalty was limited to two offenses — murder and treason. With the softening of the penalties and the stressing of prevention and correction came a decrease in crime.

Even though writers of the period protested human degradation under modern industrialism, the main factor in improvement of conditions for labor was not outside sympathy but the initiative taken by the workers themselves. They learned that organized trade unions were more constructive to their welfare than riots and the destruction of machines, which had occurred during the Chartist Movement. Gradually the laboring classes won the right to help themselves. Trade unions were legalized in 1864; two workingmen candidates were elected to Parliament in 1874.

Karl Marx founded the first International Workingmen's Association in London in 1864; three years later he published Das Kapital, a book of modern communism. In 1884, the Fabian Society appeared, headed by Beatrice and Sidney Webb, George Bernard Shaw, and other upper middle-class intellectuals. The Fabians believed that socialism would come about gradually without violence.

Once the rights of the workers were recognized, education became of interest to Parliament. In 1870, the Elementary Education Bill provided education for all; in 1891, free common education for all became compulsory. Poet George Meredith and economist and philosopher John Stuart Mill worked for "female emancipation." From this period of change came such women as Florence Nightingale and Frances Powers.

Politics and economics do not make up the whole of a nation's life. In the nineteenth century, both religion and science affected the thought and the literature of the period. In 1833, after the Reform Bill of 1832, a group of Oxford men, dissatisfied with the conditions of the Church of England, began the Oxford Movement with the purpose of bringing about in the Church a reformation which would increase spiritual power and emphasize and restore the Catholic doctrine and ritual. Begun by

John Keble, the movement carried on its reforms primarily through a series of papers called Tracts for the Times. Chief among the reformers was John Henry Newman, a vicar of St. Mary's.

محتوى المحاضرة الثالثة

The second half of Queen Victoria's reign was one of prosperity and advancement in science. Inventions such as the steam engine, the telephone, telegraph, and the wireless made communication easier and simpler. Man became curious about and interested in the unknown. New scientific and philosophic research in the fields of geology and biology influenced the religious mind of England. A series of discoveries with respect to Man's origin challenged accepted opinions regarding the universe and our place in it. Sir Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830-33) established a continuous history of life on this planet; Sir Frances Galton did pioneer work in the field of heredity; Charles Darwin's Origin of Species gave the world the theory of evolution. The Origin of Species maintained that all living creatures had developed through infinite differentiations from a single source. This one work had the most profound influence of all secular writings on the thinking of the period. Following its publication, there were three schools of thought concerning Man's origin: first, Darwin's evidence did not justify his conclusions; therefore, nothing had changed in religious beliefs regarding origin and creation. Second, Darwin's evidence had left no room for God in the universe; therefore, everything had changed and thinking must change. Third, Darwin's theories simply reaffirmed the Biblical concepts; therefore, "evolution is just God's way of doing things."

The conflict between the theologians and the scientists raged not only throughout the remainder of the century but was inevitably reflected in the literature of the period. Poets of the era can be classified through their attitudes toward religion and science. Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning stand as poets of faith, whereas Matthew Arnold and Arthur Hugh Clough represent the skeptics and the doubters. Later Victorian verse showed less of the conflict than the earlier.

Historians have called Charles Dickens the greatest of the Victorian novelists. His creative genius was surpassed only by that of Shakespeare. Many later novelists were to feel the influence of this writer, whose voice became the trumpet of protest against economic conditions of the age. George Bernard Shaw once said that Little Dorrit was as seditious a book as Das Kapital. Thus, according to critics, Dickens' Hard Times is a relentless indictment of the callous greed of the Victorian industrial society and its misapplied utilitarian philosophy.

Characterization in *Hard Times*

Introduction

In *Hard Times*, Dickens placed villains, heroes, heroines, and bystanders who are representative of his times. Even though many of these characters have names which indicate their personalities or philosophies, they are not caricatures but people endowed with both good and bad human qualities. Shaped by both internal and external forces, they are like Shakespeare's characters — living, breathing beings who love, hate, sin, and repent. True to the class or caste system of nineteenth-century England, Dickens drew them from four groups: the fading aristocracy, the vulgar rising middle class, the downtrodden but struggling labor class, and the itinerant group, represented by the circus people.

Major Characters

Representatives of the fading aristocracy are Mrs. Sparsit and James Harthouse.

Mrs. Sparsit, a pathetic, but scheming old lady, earns her living by pouring tea and attending to the other housekeeping duties for Mr. Josiah Bounderby, whom she despises. Sparing with words, she is literally a "sitter," first in Bounderby's home and later in his bank. She lends her respectability and culture to his crude, uneducated environment. Resentful of Bounderby and others who do not have the background that she has, she seemingly accepts Bounderby's philosophy of life. In direct discourse with him, she simpers and hedges; when he is not present, she scorns him and spits on his picture. Throughout the novel, Mrs. Sparsit connives and plans for her own advantage. Her role in the first book is one of waiting and watching; in the second book, she continues this role and enlists the aid of Bitzer, an aspirant to the middle class, to bring revenge upon Bounderby; in the last book, she serves as informer and is rewarded by losing her position with Bounderby and by being compelled to live with a hated relative, Lady Scadgers.

James Harthouse, the second face of the aristocracy, is a young man who comes to Coketown because he is bored with life. He is employed to advance the interests of a political party. When introduced to Louisa, he becomes infatuated with her and seeks to arouse her love. Taking advantage of Bounderby's absences from home, he goes to see Louisa on various pretexts. When Louisa refuses to elope with him, he leaves Coketown for a foreign country. The only hurt he has received is a blow to his ego or vanity.

Characters of the middle class take many faces: the wealthy factory owner, the retired merchant who is a champion of facts, the "whelp," and the beautiful Louisa nurtured in facts. Just as the buildings of Coketown are all alike in shape, so are these people alike.

Josiah Bounderby, the wealthy middle-aged factory owner of Coketown, is a self-made man. Fabricating a story of his childhood, he has built himself a legend of the abandoned waif who has risen from the gutter to his present position. To add to his "self-made" station in life, this blustering, bragging bounder has told the story of his miserable childhood so long and so loud that he believes it himself. The story is simple: he says that after being abandoned by his mother, he was reared by a drunken grandmother, who took his shoes to buy liquor; he relates often and long how he was on his own as a mere child of seven and how he educated himself in the streets. In the final book, when his story is proved false by the appearance of his mother, who had not abandoned him but who had reared and educated him, he is revealed as a fraud who had, in reality, rejected his own mother. With this revelation and other events came his downfall and eventual death.

An opinionated man, he regards the workers in his factories as "**Hands**," for they are only that — not people to him. The only truth to him is his own version of truth.

In the first book, as a friend of Thomas Gradgrind, he is intent upon having Louisa, Gradgrind's older daughter, for his wife. In the conclusion of book one he succeeds — by taking Gradgrind's son into the bank — in marrying Louisa, who does not love him, for she has never been taught to love or dream, only to learn facts. True to braggart nature, Bounderby expands the story of his miserable rise to wealth by letting everyone know that he has married the daughter of a wealthy, respectable man.

Book two reveals him more fully as the bounder; however, he is a blind bounder — he does not know that his young wife has found a younger man to whom she is attracted. In the final book, when she leaves him and returns home, his ego cannot stand the blow. He does not change, even though almost everyone and everything around him changes.

Gradgrind is the father of five children whom he has reared to learn facts and to believe only in statistics. His wife, a semi-invalid, is simple-minded; although she does not understand his philosophy, she tries to do his bidding. As the book progresses, however, he begins to doubt his own teachings. Mr. Thomas Gradgrind represents the Utilitarian philosophy of the nineteenth century.

In the first book, he takes into his home a young girl whose father, a circus clown, has abandoned her. He undertakes her education but fails since she is the product of another environment. In this

book, he presents Bounderby's suit for marriage to Louisa and is pleased when she recognizes that wealth is important.

In the second book, Gradgrind emerges as a father for the first time. He takes Louisa back into his home after she leaves Bounderby. Having lived with the foundling in his home, he has come to recognize that there are emotions such as love and compassion. When his daughter comes to him as a daughter looking for help and sanction, he reacts as a father.

In the last book, Gradgrind abandons his philosophy of facts again to help Tom, his wayward son, to flee from England so that he will not be imprisoned for theft. Gradgrind also vows to clear the name of an accused worker. Here he learns — much to his regret — that Bitzer, one of his former students, has learned his lesson well; Bitzer refuses to help young Tom escape.

Tom Gradgrind, the son, is also a face of the middle class. Having been reared never to wonder, never to doubt facts, and never to entertain any vice or fancy, he rebels as a young man when he leaves his father's home, Stone Lodge, to work in Bounderby's bank. He uses Bounderby's affection for Louisa to gain money for gambling and drink. He urges Louisa to marry Bounderby since it will be to his own benefit if she does.

Freed from the stringent rule of his father, Tom (whom Dickens has Harthouse name "the whelp") becomes a "man about town." He begins to smoke, to drink, and to gamble. When he becomes involved in gambling debts, he looks to Louisa for help. Finally she becomes weary of helping him and denies him further financial aid. Desperate for money to replace what he has taken from the bank funds, Tom stages a robbery and frames Stephen Blackpool. Just as he uses others, so is he used by James Harthouse, who has designs on Louisa.

At the last, Tom shows his complete degeneration of character. When he realizes that exposure is imminent, he runs away. The only redeeming feature of his character is that he truly loves his sister and ultimately regrets that he has brought her heartache. Escaping from England, he lives and dies a lonely life as an exile. In his last illness, he writes to his sister asking her forgiveness and love.

Louisa Gradgrind Bounderby, a beautiful girl nurtured in the school of facts, reacts and performs in a manner in keeping with her training until she faces a situation for which her education has left her unprepared. A dutiful daughter, she obeys her father in all things — even to contracting a loveless marriage with Bounderby, a man twice her age. The only emotion that fills her barren life is her love for Tom, her younger brother. Still young when she realizes that her father's system of education has failed her, she begins to discover the warmth and compassion of life. Only after her emotional conflict with Harthouse does she start her complete re-education.

Dickens employs biblical parallels to portray the characters of the struggling working class. Stephen Blackpool, an honest, hard-working power-loom weaver in Bounderby's factory and the

first victim to the labor cause, is likened unto the biblical Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Just as the biblical Stephen was stoned by his own people, so is Stephen Blackpool shunned and despised by his own class. Even though he realizes that Bounderby and the other factory owners are abusing the workers and that something must be done to help them, he refuses to join the union. He is perceptive enough to know that Slackbridge, the trade-union agitator, is a false prophet to the people.

Married to a woman who had left him years before the story opens, Stephen finds himself hopelessly in love with Rachael, also a worker in the factory. Rachael is likened unto the long-suffering woman of the same name in biblical history. Stephen cannot marry his beloved because the laws of England are for the rich, not the penniless workman. When he goes to Bounderby for help to obtain a divorce from his drunken, degenerate wife, he is scorned and bullied until he speaks up, denying Bounderby's taunts. On another occasion he defends the workers against Bounderby's scathing remarks; consequently, he is fired and has to seek a job in another town. When Stephen learns that he is accused of theft, he starts back to Coketown to clear his name; however, he does not arrive there. He falls into an abandoned mine pit and is found and rescued minutes before his death. Although he is just one of the "Hands" to Bounderby and others of the middle class, Stephen Blackpool is a very sensitive, religious man who bears no enmity toward those who have hurt him.

The last social group that Dickens pictures is best represented by Cecilia "Sissy" Jupe, who is the antithesis of the scholars of Gradgrind's school. This group, the circus people whose endeavor is to make people happy, is scorned by the Gradgrinds and the Bounderbys of the world. Sissy, forsaken by her father, who believed that she would have a better life away from the circus, is a warm, loving individual who brings warmth and understanding to the Gradgrind home. Because of her influence, the younger girl, Jane Gradgrind, grows up to know love, to dream, and to wonder. In the conclusion of the book, Sissy can look forward to a life blessed by a husband and children. The handwriting on the wall foretells her happiness and Louisa's unhappiness.

Minor Characters

Dickens used the minor characters for comic relief, for transition of plot, and for comparison and contrast.

Bitzer is a well-crammed student in Gradgrind's model school of Fact. He is the living contrast to the humble, loving, compassionate Sissy. Bitzer can best be characterized as the symbolic embodiment of the practical Gradgrindian philosophy: he is colorless, servile, mean; and he lives by self-interest.

Mr. M'Choakumchild, a teacher in Gradgrind's model school, is an advocate of the Gradgrind system. Dickens says that he might have been a better teacher had he known less.

Slackbridge, symbolized as the false prophet to the laboring class, is the trade-union agitator.

Mrs. Pegler is the mysterious woman who shows great interest in Mr. Bounderby. One meets her, usually, standing outside the Bounderby house, watching quietly.

Adam Smith Gradgrind and Malthus Gradgrind are Thomas Gradgrind's two youngest sons. Their names are in keeping with the economic concern of the book.

Members of the Sleary Circus, in addition to Mr. Sleary, are Emma Gordon, Kidderminster, who plays the role of cupid; Mr. E. W. B. Childers, and Josephine Sleary.

Unnamed characters are members of the "Hands" and the sick wife of Stephen Blackpool.

Significance of Setting in *Hard Times*

Settings can be classified as scenic, essential, and symbolic. Scenic is self-explanatory; it is there, but it does not influence the story. Essentially means that the story could not have happened any other place or at any other time. A symbolic setting is one which plays an important role in the philosophy of the book. Such a setting is **Coketown, England**. Coketown, with all its brick buildings and its conformity and sterility and the Educational System, is conspicuous as part of the setting. Dickens uses many symbols to convey the horror of the setting: Coketown is the brick jungle; the factories are the mad elephants; the death-bringing smoke is the serpent; the machinery is the monster. The sameness, the conformity, creates an atmosphere of horror. An ironic note in the setting is the paradoxical reference to the blazing furnaces as Fairy Palaces.

Dickens' Philosophy and Style

Charles Dickens, required to write *Hard Times* in twenty sections to be published over a period of five months, filled the novel with his own philosophy and symbolism. Dickens expounds his philosophy in two ways: through straight third-person exposition and through the voices of his characters. His approach to reality is allegorical in nature; his plot traces the effect of rational education on Gradgrind's two children. He presents two problems in the text of his novel; the most important one is that of the educational system and what divides the school of Facts and the circus school of Fancy. The conflicts of the two worlds of the schoolroom and the circus represent the adult attitudes toward life. While the schoolroom dehumanizes the little scholars, the circus, all fancy and love, restores humanity. The second problem deals with the economic relationships of labor and management. Here one sees that Dickens lets the educational system be dominated by, rather than serve, the economic system. His philosophy, expounded through his characters, is best summarized by Sleary, who says that people should make the best of life, not the worst of it.

Dickens' symbolism takes such forms as Coketown being a brick jungle, strangled in sameness and smoke, the belching factories as elephants in this jungle, the smoke as treacherous snakes, and the children as little "vessels" which must be filled. His symbolism also becomes allegorical as he utilizes biblical connotation in presenting the moral structure of the town and the people.

In addition to dialogue, straight narration, and description, Dickens employs understatement to convey through satire the social, economic, and educational problems and to propose solutions for these problems. His often tongue-in-cheek statements balance the horror of the scenery by the absurdity of humor, based on both character and theme.

Major Themes:

Fact vs. Fancy:

Dickens depicts a terrifying system of education where facts, facts, and nothing but facts are pounded into the schoolchildren all day, and where memorization of information is valued over art, imagination, or anything creative. This results in some very warped human beings.

Mr. Thomas Gradgrind believes completely in this system, and as a superintendent of schools and a father, he makes sure that all the children at the schools he is responsible for and especially his own children are brought up knowing nothing but data and "-ologies".

As a result, things go very badly for his children, Tom Gradgrind and Louisa Gradgrind. Since they, as children, were always treated as if they had minds and not hearts, their adulthoods are warped, as they have no way to access their feelings or connect with others. Tom is a sulky good-for-nothing and gets involved in a crime in an effort to pay off gambling debts. Louisa is unhappy when she follows her mind, not her heart, and marries Mr. Bounderby, her father's friend. As a result of her unhappy marriage, she is later swept off her feet by a young gentleman, Mr. James "Jem" Harthouse, who comes to stay with them and who seems to understand and love her. Louisa nearly comes to ruin by running off with Harthouse.

Cecilia (Sissy) Jupe was encouraged when she was little to dream and imagine and loved her father dearly, and therefore she is in touch with her heart and feelings, and has empathy and emotional strength the other children lack. Sissy, adopted by the Gradgrinds when her father abandons her, ultimately is the savior of the family in the end.

Negative Impact of Industrialism:

Hand in hand with the glorification of data and numbers and facts in the **schoolhouse** is the treatment of the workers in the factories of **Coketown** as nothing more than machines, which produce so much per day and are not thought of as having feelings or families or dreams. Dickens depicts this situation as a result of the industrialization of England; now that towns like **Coketown** are focused on producing more and more, more dirty factories are built, more smoke pollutes the air and water, and the factory owners only see their workers as part of the machines that bring them profit. In fact, the workers are only called "Hands", an indication of how objectified they are by the owners. Similarly, Mr. Gradgrind's children were brought up to be "minds". None of them are people or "hearts".

As the book progresses, it portrays how industrialism creates conditions in which owners treat workers as machines and workers respond by unionizing to resist and fight back against the owners. In the meantime, those in Parliament (like Mr. Gradgrind, who winds up elected to office) work for the benefit of the country but not its people. In short, industrialization creates an environment in which people cease to treat either others or themselves as people. Even the unions, the groups of factory workers who fight against the injustices of the factory owners,

are not shown in a good light. Stephen Blackpool, a poor worker at Bounderby's factory, is rejected by his fellow workers for his refusal to join the union because of a promise made to the sweet, good woman he loves, Rachael. His factory union then treats him as an outcast. The remedy to industrialism and its evils in the novel is found in Sissy Jupe, the little girl who was brought up among circus performers and fairy tales. Letting loose the imagination of children lets loose their hearts as well, and, as Sissy does, they can combat and undo what a Gradgrind education produces.

محتوى المحاضرة الثامنة

Femininity:

The best, most good characters of Hard Times are women. Stephen Blackpool is a good man, but his love, Rachael, is an "Angel". Sissy Jupe can overcome even the worst intentions of Jem Harthouse with her firm and powerfully pure gaze. Louisa, as disadvantaged as she is by her terrible upbringing, manages to get out of her crisis at the last minute by fleeing home to her father for shelter, in contrast to her brother, Tom, who chooses to commit a life-changing crime in his moment of crisis. Through these examples, the novel suggests that the kindness and compassion of the female heart can improve what an education of "facts" and the industrialization has done to children and to the working middle class.

Still, not all the women in the novel are paragons of goodness. Far from it. Mrs. Sparsit is a comic example of femininity gone wrong. She cannot stand being replaced by Louisa when Bounderby marries, and watches the progression of the affair between Louisa and Jem Harthouse with glee. As she attempts to catch them in the act of eloping (and ultimately fails), she is portrayed as a cruel, ridiculous figure. Stephen Blackpool's wife, meanwhile, is bleakly portrayed as a hideous drunken prostitute.

So while the novel holds women up as potentially able to overcome the dehumanizing effects of industrialization and fact-based education, those women in the novel who do not fill this role, who have slipped from the purity embodied by Sissy and Rachael beyond even the empty-heartedness of Louisa, are presented as both pathetically comic and almost demonic. Women in the novel seem like a potential cure to the perils of industrialization, but also the most at peril from its corruption.

